



February 26, 2004

Josh Lyman
Deputy Chief of Staff
The West Wing of the Bartlett White House
Washington, DC

Dear Josh:

New York media outlets are reporting today that the Bartlett Administration received a recommendation to close New York's Fort Drum, the Army's premier and most modern installation and home of the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry). Apparently, the recommendation was made without all the facts in hand, based instead on the supposedly unlikely future of U.S. troops fighting wars in extreme winter conditions and Fort Drum's northern location in New York.

As members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees who also have the honor of representing Fort Drum, we want to make sure that such a recommendation doesn't make it into another West Wing scene. It is important that all White House advisers have the most current information to respond to such flawed proposals for the future of U.S. military facilities.

We both have had the opportunity to meet with 10th Mountain Division troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 4,000 troops from the 10th Mountain Division are currently serving in Afghanistan and additional 10th Mountain troops are serving in Iraq. By all accounts, they are accomplishing their mission with great skill and courage. 10th Mountain Division troops are the most frequently deployed division in the Army, and have also served in the past decade with distinction in climates across the world – from sunny Somalia and Haiti to chilly Bosnia and Kosovo. We have no doubt that the 10th Mountain Division's success is directly linked to the training it receives at Fort Drum and the support it is provided by the North Country community.

Because the question was raised about whether the wintry climate at Fort Drum is needed for training troops who would not in the future face such snowy conditions, we have enclosed photographic evidence to the contrary. As you can see from the photo, 10th Mountain troops in Afghanistan are currently operating in knee-deep snow. CJ would be hit with an avalanche of questions in trying to defend such a "baseless" claim!

Finally, since Fort Drum meets all of the criteria for remaining open in the base closing regulations recently published by the Pentagon, it would be ill-advised to recommend closing a base that fits so well within the Defense Department's needs in the 21st century.

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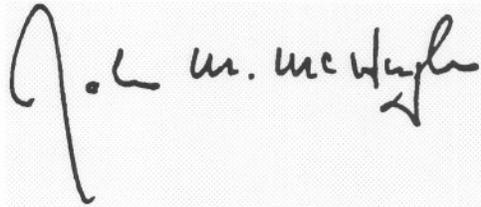
This information should begin to clear up any false impressions about the value of Fort Drum. We are willing to meet with you directly to address any other concerns that you may have, and would be happy to provide any further information to make your theater of operations over in the West Wing fully equipped to handle any attack.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Hillary Rodham Clinton



John M. McHugh
U.S. House of Representatives

PS. Please thank Toby for his efforts in trying to save Social Security. We know his heart was in the right place.

Cc:

Bradley Whitford
John Wells, Executive Producer
Lawrence O'Donnell, Jr., Consulting Producer & Writer